

SGT Thorin Sprandel



**A Tunisian paratrooper moves to collapse his canopy during the U.S.-Tunisian jump exchange that was a key component of Exercise Atlas Drop '02.**

## Cap Serrat, Tunisia

### U.S., Tunisian Troops Join Forces

U.S. paratroopers, along with Tunisian forces, jumped into the Cap Serrat countryside during Exercise Atlas Drop '02.

Led by U.S. soldiers from the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade, the two-week exercise consisted of a joint U.S.-Tunisian jump exchange, live-fire exercises, and squad-, platoon- and company-level situational training exercises.

The addition of the brigade's Reconnaissance Company, hidden in the Tunisian hills and providing surveillance for the exercise, set this year's training apart from last year's.

"The best thing is when someone comes near my position and doesn't see me," said SGT Christopher McGrath, reconnaissance-team leader. "That gets my heart pumping."

Before the live-fire assault

exercise, which included breaching and trenching the line, the 173rd Combat Support Company's assault and barrier platoon moved tons of soil, improved the wooden structure of the trench and constructed a cement culvert to help drain the trench.

"Our job was to improve the trench, ensuring we get realistic and safe training," said SPC Cesareo Meza, a construction-equipment operator.

After the jump, paratroopers from both countries participated in a ceremonial airborne wing exchange.

"This is the best Atlas Drop we've had, and I hope next year will be even better," said brigade commander COL James C. Yarbrough.

Atlas Drop began in 1996 as an annually scheduled exercise that demonstrates the 173rd Abn. Bde.'s ability to deploy quickly and conduct joint and combined missions. — SGT Thorin Sprandel, 173rd Abn. Bde. PAO

## Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

### Soldiers Explore Islam at Camp X-Ray

WHEN Navy Lt. Abuhena M. Saiful-Islam, the Muslim chaplain for Joint Task Force-160, conducted the first "call to prayer" at Camp X-Ray, many service members were just as surprised as some of the de-

tainees. If they were aware of the prayer call beforehand, most didn't understand the meaning of it. Now no one is left in the dark, as an Islamic education class is afforded to all incoming service members.

The first to receive the class were soldiers from the 988th Military Police Company, Fort Benning, Ga., who joined other soldiers and marines already guarding the detainees in Cuba.

According to Saiful-Islam, it is vital all personnel receive the class prior to assuming duties at Camp X-Ray.

"These are the service members who will be guarding and taking care of detainees' needs day after day, so it is critical they have an understanding of the Islamic religion," he said.

During the class Saiful-Islam discusses the Islamic belief system, basic terms used by Islamic followers, and the five pillars of faith — the declaration of faith, prayer, purification of wealth, fasting and pilgrimage.

He also explains to soldiers how each of these would fall in with the job they are doing and how they could best perform their jobs while not violating de-

Sgt. Joshua S. Higgins, USMC



**Chaplain (LT) Abuhena M. Saiful-Islam speaks to soldiers about the religious rights of Muslim detainees at Camp X-Ray.**



**Arnold Schwarzenegger joins SFC Jesus Piñeda of the Texas National Guard's Company C, 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry, atop a Bradley fighting vehicle at Camp McGovern, Bosnia.**

tainees' rights in accordance with the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Saiful-Islam said some concerns over the detainees' rights were voiced upon his arrival in Cuba. The issue, he said, has since dwindled following positive reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

"Issues were brought to my attention by some of the detainees that prayer had been disturbed," said Saiful-Islam. "The reason this occurs is because service members may not recognize when a detainee is praying, or some of the customs Islamic followers abide by. I think this class will clear things up."

For guards at Camp X-Ray, the class is a welcome tool that they hope will help them on the job.

"I think if we respect the detainees, they will probably be more cooperative with our security measures," said SPC Melissa D. Manes. "This will make our job much easier." — *Marine Sgt. Joshua S. Higgins, Joint Information Bureau*

#### **Eagle Base, Bosnia**

### **Schwarzenegger Visits Eagle Base**

MOVIE icon and bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger recently took his latest blockbuster, "Collateral Damage," to Eagle Base, Bosnia.

"I have often played an action hero in the movies, but you soldiers are the real action heroes," the actor said, introducing his newest thriller to a packed house inside the base's fest tent.

Before the evening premiere, Schwarzenegger visited Camp McGovern, where he fired the M-16 assault rifle at the simulator range and the M-240 machine gun with live ammunition, and took a ride on a Bradley fighting vehicle.

"He was really nice to be around. I was very relaxed," said SFC Jesus Piñeda, a member of the Army National Guard's

49th Infantry Division who accompanied the star inside the Bradley.

CPL Phillip M. Kriner of the Fort Drum, N.Y.-based 10th Mountain Div. was excited to get his idol's autograph.

"I've watched all his films," he said.

During his visit, Schwarzenegger signed autographs, posed for photos with soldiers, and told them he appreciated all their hard work.

"America is the land of opportunity," he said. "I and everybody who enjoys success in America knows it's because you protect our country."

"We haven't got the big names visiting out here," said SSG Michael Krozer, a Louisiana Army Guard soldier. "This is definitely

a morale booster."

A few lucky soldiers at the fitness center pumped a little iron during an impromptu workout session with the muscle man.

The "Terminator" pledged before his departure: "I'll be back!" — *SSG John W. House, 382nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



**Schwarzenegger autographs a photo for CPL Phillip M. Kriner of the 10th Mtn. Div.**